Grand Canyon

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona

Fire Management Plan
Natural Resources – Wildlife and Water Quality

The National Park Service will strive to understand, maintain, restore, and protect the inherent integrity of the natural resources, processes, systems, and values of the parks. NPS Management Policies (2001)

With Euro-American settlement came intensive livestock grazing, fire suppression, and habitat fragmentation. Reintroducing fire into the resulting changed ecosystems will require careful planning to minimizing impacts to wildlife.

With five major life zones spanning 1.2 million acres, Grand Canyon National Park is home to numerous rare, endemic, and specially protected species.


Kaibab squirrel


Sentry milk-vetch


Mexican spotted owl


Flannelmouth sucker


Northern goshawk



California condor

Some Examples of Post Fire Treatment

Post fire treatment to slow the erosion process is often necessary to minimize adverse effects on water quality, habitat and infrastructure.

Placing logs along the contour of slopes and installing temporary check dams in channels can reduce sediment loading.


Conservation Measures

- Developing vegetation objectives to be met through fire program to improve wildlife habitat
- Raking forest litter away from nest trees and snags to preserve these important habitat components
- Covering portable water tanks lessens attractiveness to California condors and insures they do not become trapped
- Designing fire prescriptions to preserve old growth


Concerns That Can Be Minimized or Prevented Through Appropriate Fire Management:

- Loss of wildlife habitat through unwanted wildland fire
- Direct wildlife disturbance and mortality
- Introduction and spread of exotic plant species
- Loss of productive soil through overheating (sterilization) and erosion
- Excessive erosion and degradation of water quality




Monitoring Recovery

Erosion pins (right) document amount of soil eroded both locally and on a watershed scale.



Repeat photography documents the rate and magnitude of both physical and biological processes as well as the progress and character of ecological recovery.